

## OP 21 - Service Animals

<b>Policy Type:</b>	Operational	<b>Policy Number:</b>	OP 21
		<b>Policy Approval Date:</b>	April 6, 2023
<b>Policy Title:</b>	Service Animals	<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	
		<b>Next Review Date:</b>	April 2027

### Background

---

To meet requirements of the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* (Ontario Regulation 429/07) made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*, this procedure is required for Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library staff, volunteers and agents.

### Definition of a Service Animal

---

According to the AODA's Customer Service Standards, one of two conditions must apply for an animal to be considered a service animal:

1. The animal is easily identifiable as relating to the customer's disability (for example, it is a guide dog or other animal wearing an official vest or harness)
2. The customer can provide documentation from a regulated health professional confirming the animal is required due to a disability.

Service animals are not pets.

### Procedures

---

1. Staff shall ensure that the customer is permitted to enter the Library premises open to the public or third parties with the animal and to keep the animal with them unless the guide dog or service animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
2. If a customer is excluded by law from keeping their guide dog or service animal with them, Library staff shall consult with the individual to provide other measures to enable the person to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.

3. It is not necessary for staff to request documentation for verification of a guide dog or service animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the customer for reasons relating to their disability.
4. In circumstances where it is not apparent that the guide dog or service animal is used by a customer for reasons relating to their disability, Library staff may ask the person to provide documentation from one of the regulated health professionals listed below to confirm that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
  - a. Audiologist or speech-language pathologist
  - b. Chiropractor
  - c. Nurse
  - d. Occupational therapist
  - e. Optometrist
  - f. Physician or surgeon
  - g. Physiotherapist
  - h. Psychologist
  - i. Registered psychotherapist or registered mental health therapist
5. Representatives of the Library are required to ensure that this request is made in a format that respects the dignity and independence of the customer to ensure integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
6. Additional factors to consider include:
  - a. Not all disabilities are visible
  - b. Not all service animals wear identifying gear
  - c. A person is not to be separated from their guide dog or service animal
  - d. A guide dog or service animal is not to be touched
  - e. A guide dog or service animal is not to be fed or deliberately startled
  - f. Respect confidentiality of the customer and circumstances related to their guide dog or service animal
7. Reasonable behaviour is expected from those interacting with service animals. The owners of disruptive and aggressive service animals and those who interact with service animals in a negative way may be asked to leave the premises.
8. Service animals must be harnessed, leashed, or tethered while in the Library unless these devices interfere with the service animal's work or the person's disability prevents use of these devices. In that case, the person must use voice, signal or other effective means to maintain control of the animal.